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IN SUNSHINE LAND

BY EDITH M. THOMAS
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
KATHARINE PYLE



BOSTON AND NEW YORK HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY The Kimerside Press, Cambridge

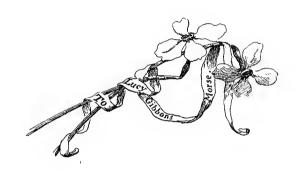
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The Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass., U. S. A. Electrotyped and Printed by H. O. Houghton & Co.





SUNSHINE LAND

They came in sight of a lovely shore, Yellow as gold in the morning light; The sun's own color at noon it wore, And had faded not at the fall of night; Clear weather or cloudy, —'t was all as one, The happy hills seemed bathed with the sun. Its secret the sailors could not understand, But they called this country Sunshine Land.

What was the secret? — a simple thing (It will make you smile when once you know). Touched by the tender finger of spring, A million blossoms were all aglow; So many, so many, so small and bright, They covered the hills with a mantle of light; And the wild bee hummed, and the glad breeze fanned, Through the honeyed fields of Sunshine Land.

If over the sea we two were bound,
What port, dear child, would we choose for ours?
We would sail, and sail, till at last we found
This fairy gold of a million flowers.
Yet, darling, we'd find, if at home we stayed,
Of many small joys our pleasures are made;
More near than we think,—very close at hand
Lie the golden fields of Sunshine Land.





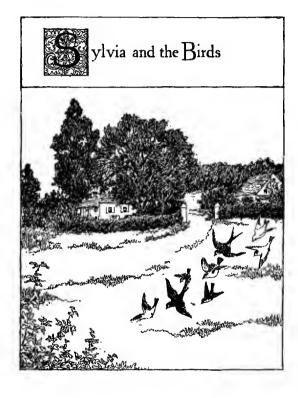
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IN SUNSHINE LAND

SYLVIA AND THE BIRDS

Ι

A pleasant afternoon in autumn. Sylvia and her mother seated in a broad piazza, the bright leaves falling around.

SYLVIA.



'VE brought the book,1 — now, won't you read to me How birds can speak and talk as well as we?

SYLVIA'S MOTHER takes the book and reads.

THESTYLIS. Where have you been all this livelong houre?

1 Randolph's Amyntas.

Mopsus. I have been discoursing with the birds.

THESTYLIS. Why, can birds speak?

JOCASTUS. In Fairy Land they can; I have heard 'em chirp very good Greek and Latin.

Morsus. And our birds talk better farre than they. . . .

THESTYLIS. But what languages doe they speak, servant?

Morsus. Several languages, as Cawation, Chirpation, Hootation, Whistleation, Crowation, Cackleation, Shreekation, Hissation.

SYLVIA (reflecting on what her mother has read).

When I was in the fields and woods to-day, What do you think I heard the birdies say?

MOTHER.

My little Sylvia, I could never tell, But birds and children know each other well. What *did* they say?

SYLVIA.

They all said just the same, But every one stopped talking when I came. They thought I'd be so sorry when I knew What they had all made up their minds to do!

MOTHER.

Indeed! What were they going to do, dear heart?

SYLVIA.

Oh, going away. To-night they mean to start.

The Sparrows — they kept flying on ahead And would n't let me hear a word they said! The Bluebird seemed to go up in the sky,

The Wren herself kept still when I passed by—

But Robin (Robin Redbreast always goes And tells to everybody all he knows;

He never will keep shut his yellow mouth!) —

Dear Robin spoke out loud, "We're going south!

You'll miss us, Sylvia dear, and we'll miss you!

I wish — oh how I wish — you might go too!

Perhaps you may" — But that was all I heard,

For some voice cried, "You gossip, silly bird!"

(After a pause.) Mother, I wish we could go south.

MOTHER.

Next year,

Your father says he hopes to take us, dear.

SYLVIA.

But next year is so very far away!

This year is best; "next year," you always say!

MOTHER.

My darling has To-Day, for work or play; What is the little verse about To-Day?

SYLVIA repeats the verse.

To-Day is my treasure
With all that is in it, —
Each hour and each minute,
For work or for pleasure;
Yet, watch as I may,
It is running away —
With each hour and each minute!



11

The scene as it really is: Sylvia's bedroom; the bed with white curtains drawn; Sylvia fast asleep.

The scene as it appears to Sylvia: A Field close by the Woods, a Stream winding by. The sun has set, casting red gleams on the water. Birds in council, perched in the branches of the trees, in the bushes, and on the reeds by the Stream. Sylvia fancies herself hidden behind a wild-rose bush listening to the talk of the Birds.

Enter a little SNIPE (crying).

Peet-weet! Peet-weet!
I've such cold feet,
And nothing to eat!
The Creek is so high
That I can't keep dry
Except when I fly!
Peet-weet!

A KILDEER.

Kildee! Kildee! Kildee! This is no place for me!

The southland I must seek — Kildee!

A BOBOLINK.

Link-a-link! Link-a-link!

My diet has made me weak;

The fields of rice must be so nice,

(To the Kildee.) I'll go with you, I

think—

Link-a-link!

A RED-SHOULDERED BLACKBIRD.
Bobaree! Bobaree!
A frost you'll see —
You'll see to your sorrow,

If you wait till to-morrow —

Bobaree!

A CHIPPING-BIRD.

Chip-chip! Chip-chip! Chip-chip! I'll give November the slip!

A HOUSE-WREN.

Sh! Sh! Sh! Every one loves the Wren! Wait, — and just once again I'll go, and, as still as a mouse,
Peep into the little house
They built for my use alone,
With a door and a porch like their own!
——Sh!

A MARYLAND YELLOW-THROAT (interrupting). Witches here! Witches here! And no wonder — so late in the year!

On! On! On!

Why should we longer stay?
On! Ere the peep of day
We should be leagues away,
Quite out of sight of land!
Our old gray Commodore
Will guide our gallant band
To a pleasant southern shore,
With the daintiest food in store!
On! On! On!

A FLOCK OF SWALLOWS (rising).

Zip! Zip! You may count on the Swallow!

We hear, and anear we will be;

The rest, if they like, may follow

O'er land and o'er sea.

A BLUEBIRD (to her mate).

Weary! Oh weary! Oh weary! It's a long, long, long way, dearie!

A ROBIN.

Quip! Quip! Cheer up! Cheer up!
But I think we ought first to sup;
With such a long journey ahead,
Pilgrims should be well fed —
Quip! Quip!

A HIGHHOLDER (shouts from the top of a dead tree).

A-wick-wick! wick-wick! wick! Yare-op!

If all this senseless chatter you would stop,
And listen, an announcement I would
make:—

Old Father Crane will soon be here to take All you small folks upon his back — Wickwick!

CHORUS OF SMALL BIRDS. (Chippy, Wren, Yellowbird, Pewee, Kinglet, &-c., &-c., &-c.)

Peet-weet! Zit! Zit! Cheeree! Ittee! Be quick!



H

Crane arrives. Bows indulgently to the assembly of Birds.

CRANE.

Don't hustle so! There 's room enough for all.

Take care! take care! you little chick, you'll fall!

The small Birds proceed to settle themselves on the Crane's back, nestling comfortably under his thick feathers.

(To the Humming-Bird.) Why, are n't you coming?

HUMMING-BIRD.

No! I may be small, But I'm as swift as any one that flies!

And brave! My independence, too, I prize!
I'll see Honduras first of any one;
You'll find me sipping sweets beneath the sun.

CRANE.

Well, saucy midget, we shall see! Good-by. (To Birds on his back.) Are you all ready now? If so, I'll fly.

They are about to fly, when Sylvia rises up from behind the wild-rose bush.

SYLVIA.

I 'd like to ask one question, if I might, But I 'm afraid you'll think me impolite.

SMALL BIRDS (alarmed and indignant).

What here! Whittee! Chee! chee! Chack! chack! Who's here?

Chack! chack! Chee! chee! Some enemy,
I fear!

The Birds bustle and look fierce. Out steps a Robin
— the one that had spoken to Sylvia the same day
in the fields,— and addresses the throng.



THE ROBIN.

I am surprised! ashamed! why, can't you tell?

It's Sylvia's voice! She knows and loves us well!

ALL THE SMALL BIRDS (together).

Oh, if it's only Sylvia, let her stay.

CRANE (with dignity, turning to Sylvia).

My little friend, what did you wish to say?

SYLVIA.

I should n't keep you waiting — it's a shame —

But, Mr. Crane, have you another name?

CRANE.

No, not exactly — but I read your thought; You're thinking of that book your uncle brought,

With stories of the little ones that wear Queer wooden shoes that clatter on the stair.

And how old Father Stork takes loving care Of them. Now, are n't you?

SYLVIA.

Yes! Oh, Mr. Crane, How can you read my thoughts so very plain?

CRANE.

I'm his first cousin in America; I carry little birds to Florida.

SYLVIA (eagerly).

Perhaps — perhaps you'll make my wish come true!

There's something I would like so much to do:

You're going south! I wish I could go too!

SMALL BIRDS (tauntingly).

Tut, tut! ha! ha! wittee! she has no wings!
These human birdies ask the strangest things!

SYLVIA (a little crossly, addressing the small birds).

If I had wings, as you have, you should see

I would n't beg some one to carry me!

THE WREN (maliciously, to the rest).

Sh! Sh! She means old Father Crane and us!

His wings are broad — no use in such a fuss!

CRANE (to Sylvia).

My wings are broad, and I would carry you,

But then what would these little people do?

SMALL BIRDS (begin to scold).

Twit! twit! Chee! chee! You promised -

CRANE.

Hush! no bird Shall ever say that I would break my word.

SYLVIA (has a bright thought).

Oh, Mr. Crane, please call the Roc! If he Could carry Sinbad, he could carry me:
I only weigh —

SMALL BIRDS (mockingly).

Ha! ha! We never heard We don't believe — that there is such a bird!

CRANE (reprovingly).

You must n't flirt your tails, and titter so; Remember, all that human birdies know, They learn from books, while you are sent to

school,

Among the branches fanned by breezes cool.

Or learn your lessons in some flowery nook: She read of Sinbad in a foolish book!

SYLVIA (disappointedly to the Crane). Then, I can't go!

CRANE (meditating).

Hm! let me see; ah, yes!
You never wore swan's down upon your
dress?

SYLVIA.

No, Mr. Crane; nor humming-birds; nor wings

Upon my hat! I would n't do such things!

CRANE.

Then, I'll arrange, at once, for you to go! A lovely friend of mine, as white as snow,

Will soon be here — with wings so broad and strong,

That they will swiftly carry you along,

Like sails of ships! And you may lay your hand

Upon his neck where all the feathers stand Like petals of white lilies, smooth and white.

A Swan floats in, and greets Mr. Crane; slightly nodding to the other Birds.

SWAN.

Good-evening, friend, if I have heard aright, You meant to start by early owlet light?

SMALL BIRDS (impatiently).

Twit! twit! Chee ip! We shan't get off tonight.

CRANE (to the Swan).

'T is true that we have been somewhat delayed;

A little unfledged bird has sought our aid (indicating Sylvia by a nod of his head).

She's none of ours, and yet she is, you'll own,

The sweetest chick a human nest has known; She asks to go. How can we leave her here alone?

SWAN.

That must not be. I'll be her floating steed, And in my beak I'll take this long green reed

For bit, and give the rein into her hand;—And so we'll sail above the sea and land!



ĮΥ

Sylvia and the Swan converse, while the other Birds are making final preparations for flight. It grows late, and the stars come out.

SYLVIA.

How good you are, dear Swan — how kind and good!

I'd try to thank you, if I ever could!

(Confidentially.) Please, may I tell you something — you won't mind?

You do look like the Swan I fed with cake, In Central Park, — the Swan upon the lake!

SWAN.

Hush! hush! I was a doleful captive then, But I escaped the tiresome haunts of men!

SYLVIA.

Oh, tell me —

SWAN.

No, not now, my little maid, Climb up! Climb up! the light begins to fade!

But all the stars are out — no fear of rain.

All's well. Now, give the signal, Father

Crane.

The little folks, as we rise on the wing, Will try that parting-song they always sing.

The little Birds on the Crane's back sing, one by one dropping off to sleep, as the Crane sails steadily along. Sylvia is carried by the Swan.

CHORUS OF LITTLE BIRDS.

To wing! to wing! to wing!

Whit tu! whit tu!

Up from the earth we spring;

Summer has gone, and we, too,

Must say adieu —

Whit tu!

To weet! to weet! to weet!

To where? to where?

The breath of the summer is sweet,
But chill is the wintry air,

And the forests are bare — To where?

Oh when? oh when? oh when?

I ween! I ween! I ween!

We go, but we'll come again!

When the land is smiling and green,

We'll be heard and be seen—

I ween!

The whole Flock move swiftly on, increasing their speed every moment. The Swan with Sylvia leaves the others far below.

SYLVIA (a little anxiously).

Shall we go on, and on, and on, and on, Till we are up among the stars, dear Swan? Because —

SWAN.

What if we do? I often roam
Far up in Heaven, to visit my old home.
How often you have seen me shining there,
Among the Constellations! Then I wear
Two stars in place of eyes! Why do you
weep?

SYLVIA (crying softly).

Because my mother —

SWAN (interrupting her, and always flying faster).

Pretty, soft, white sheep On Heaven's hillside you shall have, to keep;

You'll be a little shepherdess in blue, And the bright moon will always smile on you!

Why don't you want to go?

SYLVIA.

Because -

SWAN (looking towards his old home).

Well, why?

SYLVIA.

Because — O mother!

Sylvia wakes; her mother comes to her.

MOTHER.

There, there, don't cry!

SYLVIA.

The Swan! I thought that we were going south—

I thought — I pulled the bridle in his mouth; 'T was lonesome, without you, in Heaven! —
The Swan —

O mother, did you know where I had gone?

MOTHER.

There, tell me in the morning — it will keep; There, dear! hold mother's hand and go to sleep.

(Sings.)

Fly east, fly west —
Fly home, to rest,
And mother will sing you a song of sleep!
Sleep in the nest
With white curtains dressed,
Till sunbeams in at the window peep.

Sylvia falls asleep.



HOW SPRING AND WINTER MET



The Winter threw a fleecy net,
And caught the young Spring over-night.
He put to sleep the budding tree
Within a cloister dim and white;
And the little golden crocus flower,
That comes too early for the bee,
He hid away from sunrise hour.
The brook was conscious of his power,
And lost its trick of babbling words.

But Spring awoke, despite his craft, And out of window looked and laughed.

At first he set to sing all birds, With twittering voices small and clear, And bade them say they felt no grief To find the snow and mildewed leaf Heaped up in nests they built last year. Then from a crystal alcove high, The bluebird caroled to the sky. The robin whistled, cheer, good cheer! The sparrow rung his matin bells, And far away in reedy dells The quail a friendly greeting sent.

Then was the stifled pine not loth To shuffle off the dull white sloth; Then leaped the brook by icy stair, And snapped his fetters as he went; The sun shone out, most full and fair, And Winter rose and struck his tent.



A HANGING GARDEN



T was an empty robins' nest
Left over from last year!
And yet it held a tender guest,
That wept a dewdrop tear.

It turned its eye upon the sky—
The wind the tear brushed off;
And when the sun came out on high,
Its elfin cap 't would doff.

The guest — 't was but a chickweed flower, The tiniest ever seen — Made of the robins' nest a bower, And kept their memory green.

Who knows how there the seedling grew,
With leaves and flowering stem?—
So long ago the robins flew,
You cannot ask of them!

ROBIN'S RETURN



OBIN on the tilting bough, Redbreast rover, tell me how You the weary time have passed Since we saw and heard you last.

"In a green and pleasant land, By a summer sea-breeze fanned, Orange-trees with fruit are bent,— There the weary time I've spent."

Robin rover, there, no doubt, Your best music you poured out; Piping to a stranger's ear, You forgot your lovers here.

"Little lady, on my word,
You do wrong a true-heart bird!
Not one ditty would I sing,
'Mong the leaves or on the wing,
In the sun or in the rain;
Stranger's ear would list in vain.
If I ever tried a note,
Something rose within my throat.

"'T was because my heart was true
To the North and spring-time new;
My mind's eye a nest could see
In yon old, forked apple-tree!"



FAR IN THE WOODS IN MAY

AR in the woods, the fresh green woods in May,
Once sang a bird; but all it found

to say

Was "Keep it! keep it!" all the merry day.

The bird? I never saw it, no, not I!
I followed, but it flitted far on high;
And "Keep it! keep it!" — Echo caught
the cry.

I was so glad as through the woods I went! And now I think that "Keep it! keep it!" meant,

"Child, keep each happy thought that Heaven has sent."



THE CAT-BIRD

E sits on a branch of yon blossoming bush,
This madcap cousin of robin and thrush.

And sings without ceasing the whole morning long;

Now wild, now tender, the wayward song
That flows from his soft, gray, fluttering
throat;

But often he stops in his sweetest note, And, shaking a flower from the blossoming bough,

Drawls out, "Mi-eu, mi-ow!"

Dear merry mocker, your mimic art Makes drowsy Grimalkin awake with a start, And peer all around with a puzzled air —
For who would suppose that one would dare
To mimic the voice of a mortal foe!
You're safe on the bough, as well you know;
And if ever a bird could laugh, 't is you,
Drawling, "Mi-ow, mi-eu!"

PRAISE JUNE



RAISE June!

Morning and noon,

And when the day closes;

Praise her for roses,

The tame and the wild, Queen of the garden, and sweet-brier's child! Praise June!

Praise for the clover, —
The gypsy, the rover,
The nurse of the bee
By wayside and lea!
Praise for the splendor
Of those that attend her, —
The oriole's breast,
And the butterfly dressed

From the booths of the East! For songs, and a feast, In the strawberry meadow, Where grass throws a shadow, Where bobolinks, swinging, Keep time with their singing; For the purple flag blowing, Where slow streams are flowing; For the long day's light, And the murmuring night, When nests overcrowded. With dewy leaves shrouded, Pipe a short tune, When the wind through the trees makes a path for the moon! Praise June!



ROBIN'S SHARE

N the grass, where no one knows,
Sweetest there the berry grows,
Fuller cups of dew it drinks,
More of sun into it sinks,
Spicier breezes visit there.

And June gives it kindlier care.

Why look out to plough and sow? Why to market should I go? Far-brought dainties tempt me not! Here 's a thrifty garden-plot, Here where fields have run to waste. Wilding berries suit my taste; Though the robin gathers half, (Ripest halves!) I only laugh: June that spread this feast for me, Bade poor robin, too, make free!



EPITAPH FOR ROBIN REDBREAST

HOU shalt have a little bed Made for thee, and overspread With brown leaves for coverlet, Which the tearful dew has wet. I, among the songs of Spring

I, among the songs of Spring Will miss the song thou didst not sing.



TITANIA'S PEN



HUMMING-BIRD had plumed his wing With nice fastidious bill, And Oberon, the fairy king, Picked up a fallen quill.

Quoth he, "Of this I'll make a pen, The neatest ever seen." He trimmed the tiny quill, and then He gave it to his queen.

The fair Titania wrote a book
With this same elfin quill;
The dainty pen — I have it, look!
The book I search for still.

Perhaps 't is hid among the ferns,
Or in some squirrel's cell,
Or from its leaves the young bird learns
In easy notes to spell.



THE QUAIL'S NEST

A TRUE INCIDENT



ANY a foot in the rustling meadow
Strode onward and never
stayed;
In place of the harvester's swinging sickle,

Flashed many a warlike blade; While here a plume, and there a banner, On the stream of the light wind swayed.

The brooding mother of nestlings many
Called them again and again,
And her heart beat fast with fear and sorrow,
For the mother-call was vain,
As on their callow wings they fluttered —
Up from the grassy plain —

Fluttered, and wavered, and would have fallen,

But, as on the battalion pressed,

Many a soldier, grim or smiling,

Welcomed a downy guest,

And under his blouse of blue was sheltered The waif from a ruined nest.

"'T is a sign of good luck!" cried one blithe spirit,

"'T is a sign we shall win the day!"

And one, as he shielded the fluttering truant,

Thought of nestlings far away.

Then they all swept on where, under the smoke-wreath,

The fire of the battle lay.

At evening the heavy heart of a soldier Under his blouse grew light,

When he saw how the quail-mother's sleepy darling

Had folded its wings for the night:—
'T was the soldier who thought of his own

dear nestlings

That morn, as he entered the fight.



BIRDS OF THE SILKWEED BROOD

N August the birds of the silkweed rest, By fours and fives, round the parent nest;

Never a note they pour on the air,

Rusty green are the coats they wear -These birds of the silkweed brood.

In September they change their rusty green For the finest plumage ever was seen; Then, spreading their snowy plumes, they fly, Silent and light, through the hazy sky —

These birds of the silkweed brood.

Now swift, now slow — as the wind may blow,

By meadow and stream, they come and go,

And wherever was only one before, Now you may count a hundred, or more, Of these birds of the silkweed brood.

WINTER COMRADES



LUME and go, ye summer folk;
Fly from Winter's killing stroke,
Bluebird, sparrow, thrush, and
swallow;

Wild geese from the marshes follow,

Wood-dove from the lonesome hollow, Rise, and follow south — all follow!

Now I greet ye, hardy tribes,
That refuse the southland's bribes;
Snowy owl, and night-black crow
Startling with your wild halloo;
Blue-jay screaming like the wind
In the tree-tops gaunt and thinned;
You, in summer called "Bob White"
(Voice of far-off fields' delight),
Now among the barnyard brood
Fearless searching for your food;



Nuthatch, snowbird, chickadee,
Downy tapper on the tree;
And you twittering goldfinch drove
(Masked in gray), that blithely rove
Where the herby pastures show
Tables set above the snow;
And ye other flocks that ramble
Where the red hip trims the bramble,
Or the rowan berry bright
And the scarlet haw invite—
Winter comrades, well betide ye,
Friendly trunk and hollow hide ye,
Hemlock branches interlace,
When the northern blast gives chase.

And ye four-foot creatures small,
Fortune fair to you befall!
Mice that visit to and fro
In your runways 'neath the snow;
You that oft our granaries seek —
Chuckling thief with pouched cheek;
Squirrel gray or squirrel red,
Who, from branches overhead,
Down the riddled nutshell flings;
And ye timid, wind-fleet things,
That our tender fruit-trees spoil

With your nibbling midnight toil,
When the Yule-tide fire is low,
And the Yule stars keenest glow;
And ye quiet citizens,
That keep closer in your dens,
Without window, without latch;
Muskrat under reedy thatch;
Woodchuck, — you that sleeping pass
All the time till Candlemas,
When you rise and promptly show
Weather-signs you only know;
Winter comrades, snugly furred,
Warmly feathered, beast and bird,
Thus I greet ye, — wish ye cheer,
Now at midnight of the year!



THE VESPER-SPARROW



T comes from childhood land,
Where summer days are long
And summer eves are bland,—
A lulling good-night song.

Upon a pasture stone,
Against the fading west,
A small bird sings alone,
Then dives and finds its nest.

The evening star has heard,
And flutters into sight;
O childhood's vesper-bird,
My heart calls back, Good Night.







THE SINGING TREES

IN THE ORCHARD



HITE are the singing trees,
And every breath of the breeze
Scatters a drift of bloom
And a honey-sweet perfume;
While above and all around

Is a gentle murmuring sound.

In this music so low and sweet
Labor and pleasure meet;
Every small minstrel goes home,
And adds to the great yellow comb
Stored for the midwinter feast,
When the gift of the flowers has ceased.
Hark to the singing trees,
So full of blossoms and bees!

THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF THE FLOWERS

HE Mayflower, with her little rosy feet,

Ran out to meet the Spring, all sweet and shy.

Blue Violets in the meadow had their seat,

Where they could see their home, the azure sky.

The Windflower was a wandering child of air, She came upon the soft wind from the south; She had fine garments given her to wear, In color like a sea-shell's curling mouth.

A country lass that never dared look up, The Trillium in the shadow chose to grow. The Dandelion and the Buttercup Were touched by Midas' finger long ago.

The Primrose slipped away from moonlight land,

All faint and wan, delicious with the dew,

And would not open till a moonbeam spanned

The evening dusk, and tender kisses threw.

The Water-lily was a naiad's child;
The Bindweed was a wanderer pale and worn;

The pleading Rose, upon the bramble wild, A captive maiden looking forth forlorn.

The red Lobelia lit a fire, and flung The embers all around a shady dell; The Daisy had a gypsy's crafty tongue, And youthful fortunes glibly would she tell!

The Asters were a shower of stars that fell Amid the dimness of an autumn night. Witch-hazel woke, and cheerly cried, "All's well!"

And met with smiles the dull November light.



THE WHISPER OF THE LEAVES



HEAR the voice of Summer Above the voice of Spring; The birds are still beside it, How loud soe'er they sing.

I hear the voice of Summer —
And yet 't is small and weak,
Soft, light, and all uncertain,
As though a flower should speak!

But yesterday 't was silent, —
The trees were gray and bare;
To-day a myriad murmur
Is floating everywhere.

It comes with dappling shadows
Through which the sunbeam weaves;
It draws its breath from zephyr —
This whisper of the leaves!

I know not it rejoices, I know not if it grieves; It has no tone nor accent, —
This whisper of the leaves.

I heard it, far in dreamland,
On bitter winter eves,—
The wished-for voice of Summer,—
The whisper of the leaves!



WHAT THE ROSES SAID



TOLD the roses that bloomed in my gardenA tale they were loth to hear;Of thorns uncovered, of frosts, and of Winter, —

The crabbed old age of the year!

The darlings of June — they would n't believe me!

They asked what proof I could show;

Would I bring but a shred of the robe of Winter;

A lock from the fleece of the snow?

Year after year they had bloomed in my garden,

And never such change had they seen;

It was true they had slept, but, as oft as they wakened,

The season was smiling and green!

"STAY SO, SWEET SEASON"

A SPRING SONG



WISH that the feet of the dancing child —
April that trips to the wind-flute wild —

Could be stayed from their motion, and rest awhile

Till the showery sky shall wear a smile,
Till the thrush calls twice, and the crocus
looks up

And invites the bee with her honeyed cup!
Sweet, sweet, you've no reason
To hurry away;

Stay so, sweet Season, Stay, oh stay!

And I wish that the May with her fair cool face

Might linger awhile in her native place,

Till the fruit and the thorn tree reach her down

A handful of blossoms, to weave her a crown;

But the blossoms around her unheeded fall,—
She listens — she follows some far-off call!
Sweet, sweet, you've no reason
To hurry away;

Stay so, sweet Season, Stay, oh stay!





BLUE-BELL HOLLOW

HERE 'S a fairy in Blue-bell Hollow Who wakes in the spring of the

year;
She calls and the children hear,
She calls, and the children follow
Down Blue-bell Hollow.
There the flowers are blue,
And so is the dew
That hangs in their bells,
And the little brook too,—
Half-hidden from view,
Is of just the same hue:—

All done by the spells Of the fairy who dwells In Blue-bell Hollow!

THE WORRIED VIOLET

Y woodside ways, in moist green nooks,

A small pale violet holds its place;

Three lines are in its tender face —

How careworn and how sad it looks!

While every other violet Blooms thoughtless in the shade or sun, What secret has this little one, What trouble it cannot forget?

"INNOCENCE"

VERSES SENT WITH BLUETS TO A LITTLE GIRL

FIELD I met a darling crowd
Of blossom-children sweet,
(Dear Mother Nature must be
proud,

These children keep so neat); So thick they stood, I cried aloud,

"I dare not move my feet!"

Their dresses all were like the sky
When clouds have filmed the blue,
And each one had a sunny eye,
And Heaven-secrets knew;
But some, not wide awake, or shy,
Their heads bent down from view.

I touched the tallest in a row:

"Dear heart! your name I'd call,

If you your name would please to show."

A voice came faint and small:

"My name I truly do not know;

I'm Innocence, — that 's all!"

Now, there's a child-flower soft and bright,
And Innocence is she;
I thought these blossom-children might
Her very sisters be;
And so I sent them, blue and white,
To Dorothea G.



THE SIGN OF THE GOLDENROD



HEN Indian corn is in the shock,
And south-bound birds begin
to flock,
And seed-plumes fly, and gossa-

mer drifts,

Then goldenrod its sign uplifts.

Its healthful breath is in the air; Its stores the tame and wild bees share; Lone country roads and woodward lanes It decks as if for kingly trains.

The farmer's boy will often stop To pull a plume of "yellow-top," And little children fill their arms With this free treasure of the farms. It blooms for all—it shines for me! Since near or far I can but see A sunlight stolen from the past, A gleam from days too blithe to last.

THE FLOWER OF THE THISTLE



'M a queen of pride and splendor,
Throne and purple lack not I;
Never yet I made surrender,
Foe and lover I defy!

Never shall the red-mouthed cattle Crop me like the simple grass; Arms presented I give battle, If a step too near they pass.

Yet I've friends to make me merry;
I have bribes to win the bee;
My fine bird, the wild canary,
Tips his jaunty cap to me.

In the Autumn I go sailing, Up, and out of sight of men, Till the lazy zephyr failing Lets me down to earth again.

I'm a queen of pride and splendor, Throne and purple lack not I; You may call me wild, untender, You may praise, or pass me by!

A NATURAL MATHEMATICIAN

HERE dwells mid thorns and
viny tangles,
In freakish colors dressed,
A sage who dotes on curves and

And many a curious test, Yet ne'er was found in learned wrangles, And ne'er was known to jest.

angles

Pose him with line or conic section!

To demonstrate its laws

And show their close and fine connection,

He sets about and draws

With noiseless care and shrewd inspection

Some shimmering threads of gauze.

To close a circle in triangle,
He thinks no great affair —
Straight out from thorn and viny tangle,
'T is sketched upon the air,
And floats, a filmy silver spangle
For bright-eyed Morn to wear!



THE STOLEN PANSIES



HE reached through the fence (if the truth must be told),
And her chubby hands had all they could hold!

But she never in all her life before, Had seen the faces these pansies wore! One looked like an urchin, a smirch on its cheek,

And it said as plainly as pansy could speak, "It's stealing, you know, and I'll tell the whole town!"

One, like an ogre, wore a dark frown, And looked at her hard with its terrible eve.

"Little girl, you dare not look up to the sky!"

One drooped its sweet head, reproachful, yet mild,

"You've killed me, but I'll forgive you, poor child!"

Then they all looked at her, and looked at each other,

"You bad little girl, You sad little girl,

Leave us! run home, — run home to your mother!"

THE BUTTERFLY AND THE BEE

FROM THE FRENCH

F

F the weather is fair,"
Said the butterfly, jaunty and
free,—

"If the weather is fair,
I'll go dance in the meadow
there!"

"And I," said the prudent bee,

"Will be early at work, you will see, —
If the weather is fair!"



BUTTERFLY AND THISTLE-BALL

AINTED WINGS hailed Silver Sphere,

Riding through the heavens clear: "O you lovely fragile waif,

Without wings to make you safe, Tell me how it is you dare Seek your fortunes through the air!"

Silver Sphere touched Painted Wings Softly, in their wanderings:

"Nay, but tell me, traveler fine, How, without a wheel like mine, You can venture as you do Up the wide and breezy blue!"

BUTTERFLY HONEY

I



EY, my gay rover!
Skimming the crest of the clover,
Happy-go-lucky, ne'er-do-weel

fellow,

Idlest of creatures alive! —
Why not provide you a hive,
And store it with good things dulcet and
mellow?

I'll come, by and by, to see how you thrive.

11

For butterfly honey
Is rarer than Oberon's money:
I've heard of a few that found the bright
penny,
But if ever you left one sip
Of sweet on a petal's tip,
At least, 't was never my luck to find any,
Though searching the blossom from heart to

lip.

Ш

'T will be my good pleasure
To come and partake of your treasure;
Wine o' the lilac and daffydowndilly,
And all the dainties you found,
Making your May-morning round,
And midsummer thefts from the rose and
the lily:
With goldenrod cordial the feast shall be

1V

(The Butterfly replies.)

Ha, ha! but I'm wiser
Than you, my thoughtful adviser, —
My eloquent friend, — my silver-tongued
suitor!
I am no slaving bee,
To pay you your lordly fee!
Ha, ha! — a hive for a gallant freebooter!
No honey of mine you ever shall see!

OAK AND ACORN



AID a stark and proud Oak-tree,
"Acorn do not boast to me!"
Quick the delving Acorn spoke,
"Don't despise me, Gaffer Oak!"

OAK.

"Youngling, look - I seek the skies!"

ACORN.

"I go down, but I will rise!"

OAK.

"I of yesterdays have store!"

ACORN.

"Of to-morrows I have more!"

OAK.

"Many histories I can tell!"

ACORN.

"I of hopes can speak as well!"



THE POPLAR-TREE



WONDER if the poplar-tree
Is standing, as it used to stand,
Beside the street, the first to
greet

The traveler to the Pleasant Land!

It seemed to see the morning sun
Before he rose above the hill,
And the stars go down behind the town
When summer nights were clear and
still.

And yet its leaves forever sighed —
I thought because it stood alone,
Alone and straight, outside the gate,
No sister tree to call its own!

And when I left the Pleasant Land,
And scarcely through my tears could see,
'T was last to say, from far away,
A sad and kind good-by to me.

JUGGLERS OF THE MOSS



OME time you will come across
Elfin jugglers in the moss.
This will be the way they'll look
In their shady forest nook:
Gray-green faces, gray-green hair,

Gray-green are the clothes they wear. Some are short and some are tall, Light and nimble are they all, Nodding this way, nodding that — Pointed cap or plumed hat; Now on tiptoe spinning round, Now with forehead to the ground; Bowing last, their hands they kiss.

But the strangest thing is this, Though you go and come again, In these postures they remain, And your movements never heed. Have you seen them? — Then, indeed, You can say that you have been Where King Oberon and his Queen Oft in summer-time do go — To the elfin jugglers' show.

AUTUMN FASHIONS



HE Maple owned that she was tired of always wearing green, She knew that she had grown, of late, too shabby to be seen!

The Oak and Beech and Chestnut then deplored their shabbiness,

And all, except the Hemlock sad, were wild to change their dress.

"For fashion-plate we'll take the flowers," the rustling Maple said,

"And like the Tulip I'll be clothed in splendid gold and red!"

- "The cheerful Sunflower suits me best," the lightsome Beech replied;
- "The Marigold my choice shall be," the Chestnut spoke with pride.
- The sturdy Oak took time to think " I hate such glaring hues;
- The Gillyflower, so dark and rich, I for my model choose."
- So every tree in all the grove, except the Hemlock sad,
- According to its wish ere long in brilliant dress was clad.
- And here they stand through all the soft and bright October days;
- They wished to be like flowers indeed, they look like huge bouquets!



SNOWFLAKES

HAT are you—you delicate stray things,
Floating and falling
Through the soft air?
Are you some child-angel's playthings,
Gone past recalling,
Dropped unaware?

Did he, to the stars a near neighbor,
A smiling-eyed dreamer,
Study their form,
Then make you with lightest of labor —
Young heavenly schemer
Above the white storm?



TALKING IN THEIR SLEEP

OU think I am dead,"

The apple-tree said,
"Because I have never a leaf to
show —

Because I stoop,
And my branches droop,
And the dull gray mosses over me grow!
But I'm all alive in trunk and shoot;
The buds of next May
I fold away —

But I pity the withered grass at my root."

"You think I am dead,"
The quick grass said,
"Because I have parted with stem and blade!

But under the ground I am safe and sound

With the snow's thick blanket over me laid. I'm all alive and ready to shoot,

Should the spring of the year Come dancing here —

But I pity the flower without branch or root."

"You think I am dead,"
A soft voice said,
"Because not a branch or root I own?
I never have died,
But close I hide
In a plumy seed that the wind has sown.
Patient I wait through the long winter hours;

You will see me again —
I shall laugh at you then,
Out of the eyes of a hundred flowers.





"PLAY WITH ME"

HE. Kitten came this morning, and said, With a touch of her paw and a

turn of her head, — "Play, play with me!"

And Skye, the terrier, caught my hand, And tried to make me understand,—
"Play, play with me!"

And Nelly nipped my shoulder quite hard, And then she went prancing around the yard,—
"Play, play with me!"

I played with them all! Now, would n't you play,

If a little child, like me, should say, "Play, play with me?"

JOHNNY'S SISTER APOLOGIZES

OOR Johnny! he sat up so straight by the wall,

When uncle Will's friend was making a call;

He never meant to be saucy at all!

When the gentleman smiled and came over his way,

I suppose Johnny thought he was going to say,

"Now, tell me whose little boy are you?"
So he tried to say something pleasant, too —
But dear me! I did n't know what I should
do,

When he looked up and said, "Whose papa are you?"

I almost wished I was deaf and blind, But the gentleman (he was so very kind) — He kept on smiling and did n't mind.

FRANKNESS



AKE a doughnut, my dear, — take two."

The visitor looked with a wistful eye

But not at the doughnuts — ah, no!

Her wishes were centred on pie:
"I can get doughnuts at home,"
The little girl said with a sigh.

A CHILD'S LOGIC



WO eyes of a purple pansy's hue, Two eyes met mine in calm survey.

"My child, I like your eyes so true."

Then did the little maiden say,
"If you like my eyes, you like me too!"

"GRANDMOTHER'S GATHERING BONE-SET"

RANDMOTHER 's gathering boneset to-day;
In the garret she 'll dry and hang

it away.

Next winter I'll "need" some boneset tea —

I wish she would n't think always of me!



A BEAR STORY



T story-telling time last night,
When all the rest had done,
Our "Little Sister" (four years
old)

Began, brimful with fun:

"There was a teeny little girl, —
Not very good, I'm'fraid;
She would n't learn to read or sew,
But played, and played, and played!

"She'd run away, — oh yes, she would, — She ran so far away A big black bear came out of the woods

A big black bear came out of the woods And ate her up, one day!"

But here the story-teller paused, Round-eyed, and out of breath, —

- "And then this teeny little girl
 Ran home, 'most scared to death!"
- "Oh, ho! ha, ha!" the children laughed
 (And so, I think, would you);
 But "Little Sister" gravely said:
 "You need n't laugh, it's true."
- "But when the bear had eat her up,
 You know it could n't be,"—

 "He did n't eat her every bit,"—

 He left her feet, you see!"

LITTLE SISTER REHEARSES

WISH that the poet who wrote these verses Could see Little Sister when she

rehearses; For she is a poem, all in herself,

The gay little, grave little, whimsical elf!

She begins with a birdlike start and flutter—With just the same air does the sparrow utter

His own small song in the lilac close by —
The same arch way with his head and his
eye!

The voice of the bird is no sweeter — no clearer;

He stops in the midst of his song to hear her,

And the morning sunbeam and morning air

Together come in to kiss her soft hair.

Some of the words are too hard — 't is no matter:

Just as a brook with musical chatter Glides over its pebbles and never trips, So over the hard words smoothly she slips.

Some of the thoughts no doubt are beyond her;

But of gowns with long trains Little Sister is fonder

Than of frock and pinafore worn every day; And "grown-up thoughts" please in just the same way. As her voice ripples on, as her bright eye glances,

'T is plain to be seen Little Sister has fancies

No more to be caught than the morning air And morning sunbeam that kiss her soft hair.

THE LITTLE VERSE AT THE FOOT OF THE PAGE

'M the toddling child at the foot of the page,

But I sing like a wren or a line

But I sing like a wren, or a linnet;

All smile when they see me come on the stage,

I sing, - and am gone in a minute!

OUR FOUR-FOOTED FRIENDS IN SPECTACLES

LD Tabby, watching at a mousehole,

Looks wondrous shrewd and wondrous wise,

And well may mice be shy and cautious,

For she has glasses on her eyes.

And Rover leaps and frolics wildly,
When his young master hunting goes,
But waits to have his spec's adjusted
Upon his black and honest nose.

And Dobbin now turned out to pasture — Poor Dobbin's sight is growing dim — Stands by the gate and whinnies loudly Till some one brings his spec's to him.

And mother Crumple, so near-sighted, Could never find her frisky calf Without those precious gold-rimmed glasses That make her pretty Daisy laugh.

THE MOLE

E

ELL all your wise men who pronounce me blind,

Mine eyes are good, though small and hard to find, —

Yet, even so, serve better than their own,

Else they had *looked*, nor said that I have none!



WHAT THE LAMBS SAY



AID the little shepherdess,
"Many wise folk cannot guess
What the lambs say when they
cry,

Or what the old sheep do reply."

Can you tell? (I asked). "Oh yes!" Said the little shepherdess:

"All the young lambs say, 'Ma-a! ma-a!'
All the old sheep answer, 'Ba-a!'

"If a stranger comes this way, Or the young ones, in their play, From their tender mothers stray,
And go searching all around
Every stone and bushy mound,
Then the young lambs cry, 'Ma-a! ma-a!'
But their mothers' answer, 'Ba-a!'—
Just to shame them when they cry,
Silly lambs to be so shy!"

STRAY CHILDREN

ISSING my darling, I called through the hall,
"Where are you? Where are you, my little stray lamb?"
A moment's pause and she an-

swered my call
In a slow, soft voice so plaintive and small,
"Find me, I do not know where I am."

So vast is that circle we call the sky,
Though God, we trust, holds the world in
His palm,
Well many and little length of the

Well may each little, lonely child cry, And so, though grown older, may you and I, "Father, I do not know where I am!"



AGNES



LL round the yard the morning through,

Her mother watched her at her play;

The blooming lilacs dropped sweet dew,

With here and there a broken spray -

Of purple or of white, a spray, Pulled down, a flower-soft face to meet; The grasses bend, then upward sway, And keep no print of Agnes' feet.

The school-bell calls, her way she takes; The gleaming rails are crossed in haste, The train's long smoke a picture makes, — A tumbling cherub, roguish-faced.

The afternoon is scarcely done;— With faces white, and dread to see, They bring her home,—but never one With half so white a face, as she!

The heavy wheels roll far away, The smoke paints pictures on the skies; In her small chamber, done with play, A blossom shed, — the school-child lies,

With soft round cheek and smoothed lock Against the pillows' drifted snow, Like some young creature of the flock That falls asleep where daisies blow.

With straining eyes and tightened brows, And heart that almost stops its beat, Her mother, round and round the house, Still looks for prints of Agnes' feet.

If she could find them she would weep, And give them tears and kisses sweet — But ah! the grass blades would not keep The little prints of Agnes' feet!





LA MUSIQUE

(On an old French Engraving.)



ITTLE peers of olden France,—
Jaunty cap with plume a dance,
Snow-white ruff, and careless curl,
Ear-drop, necklace, all of pearl!
Little lady, little knight,

Sing unto your hearts' delight, Warbling clear, or humming low. But it is not ours to know What the words or what the notes Tuned by your soft treble throats; Not a tone our ears can win From the pleading violin, And your fingers, as they poise On the keys, awake no noise. Dainty birds of long ago, Only this we surely know: Other children change and change, Till their childish selves grow strange. And their mothers softly sigh, Seeing how the morn slips by; You three courtiers small and gay -You will be the same alway! Never Time with his rough share Comes to plough your foreheads fair ; From all touch of changeful days You were caught with your sweet lays; By the painter's loving skill We may see and love you still; Blithe you were - and keep you so. Dainty birds of long ago!



CRIES OF THE NEWSBOY

(NEWS! SUN! OR WORLD!)

Ι



RUEL the roar of the city ways, Where life on a myriad errands whirled;

But suddenly up from the jarring maze,

Like a rocket thrown high, went a ringing cry:

"New-Sunny-World! New-Sunny-World!"

There was n't a glimpse of the sun anywhere; Up through the streets the sea fog curled; Grim was the light and leaden the air;

The world looked old, yet that voice rang bold:

"New-Sunny-World! New-Sunny-World!"

The brisk little crier I could not see,
But I treasured the rocket cry he hurled,
And thought, "This is wonderful news to
me!

Heigh-ho! is it true? Is it so to you?

A New Sunny World?"

11

Up from the city's murky streets forlorn,
There comes a ringing cry at early morn,
That lets my fancy pass these stony bounds,
By hinting of sweet country sights and
sounds.

Down there a little Mercury of the press, Bright-eyed, shock-haired, and ragged, as I guess,

Cries the damp roll of "Tribunes" 'neath his arm;

The listening walls give back the shrill alarm.

'T is Morning piapers! Morning piapers! still —

Like some quaint bird with but one call or trill;

'T is Morning piapers! Morning piapers!—
aye,

There is an old-world accent in the cry.

Unknown this cuckoo fledgeling of the street Beguiles my lingering sleep with service sweet

Of morning pipers, piping blithe and clear From some imagined sward or thicket near.



LOST ON THE ELEVATED ROAD!



BOVE the stony thoroughfare,
So loud with wheels and clattering feet,
There is a highway in the air,
And iron wheels shake the
steely street.

Beside this road are wires that bear Impatient, silent Thought along; O'erlooking both, are windows where Flowers try to bloom, and children throng.

The oddest sight — two little shoes, Hung on the wires, I saw to-day;

It seemed to me they might be clues To trace some precious runaway!

AN ITALIAN BOY SINGING IN THE STREET



FT in this quiet street is heard
The sweet voice of a migrant
bird

That strays from distant lands. He sings and waits, and waits and sings —

A coin upon the pavement rings; — The stranger understands!

A kiss upon the finger tips,
A smile upon the crimson lips, —
A smile the eyes repeat!
He sings and waits, and waits and sings;
It is the smile the white coin brings,
And not the song, though sweet!



IN "CHANGE"

THE YOUNG CASHIER



HE sat at her desk the long day through;

'T was Spring, and she came from the country I knew,

By the branch of mock-orange that graceful and low

Fell over the desk, like a wreath of snow.

She gave me my change — and, smiling, a spray

Of the branch she broke, at peep of day, From the bush that blooms by her mother's door

Far from the city's rude uproar.

THE VASE THAT RAN AWAY

HAT art is long and time is fleeting,"

By sad experience all must own;

Reversed, the proverb bears repeating —

As in poor Harry's sketch is shown.

His tedious task at last completing,
The lines, all "wrong," the truth display,
That time is long, and art is fleeting
When antique vases run away!

GIVE THE BOYS A HOLIDAY

ESIDE the Hellespont a banished sage
Felt life fast slipping from his

mortal frame;

Around him stood the friends of . his calm age,

Wept softly, called him by his honored name.

"What shall we do, O master wise and dear, When thou art gone among the silent ways,—

What shall we do to keep thy memory clear, What rites decree, what bronze or marble raise?"

His paling lips a faint smile overspread,
His faded eyes shot forth a moment's
ray:

"Do naught for me, O friends," the dying said.

"Do naught but give the boys a holiday."

Ah forecast shrewd! Take heed, whoe'er thou be,

Thou to the heart of child and youth find way:

The warrior, statesman, prince, forgot may be,

Not those who "give the boys a holiday."

"FLY!"



F young Demetrius the tale is told, A prince of friends, a monarch's son of old;

He, when his father's jealous hatred girt

A comrade's life, did save that life from hurt.

For what he dared not in a whisper sound, With careless spear he wrote upon the ground, —

"Fly, Mithridates, fly!" No word was said, But in the night-time Mithridates fled.

Ah, would that trustful youth a friend possessed

To warn of snares that treacherously infest; And would that youth might read and well apply

The legend terse, "Fly, Mithridates, fly!"







A FIELD OF RYE



N the middle of the rye

Nothing can be seen but sky—
Or, perhaps, the village spire
On the hill, but scarcely higher
Than these bearded heads of
grain.

Going through this narrow lane, All at once they smite your cheek, In a sudden angry freak; Then, retiring, interlace, Throwing shadows on your face! When the west wind takes its way Through the rustling field, we play We are swimming out to sea, And the birds that fly may be Sea-gulls darting through the spray! Or, at other times, we play That the stalks of rye are trees
Whispering, whispering in the breeze —
Not for people like ourselves,
But for cunning little elves,
That through all the daytime sleep,
Till the moon begins to peep;
Then they rise, and, joining hands,
Dance about in merry bands.



TODLIN ISLAND



N this silver inlet's breast,
Lies an isle in glamour drest.
All its trees are small but old,
Threescore winters each has
told,

And the patriarch of the clan
Is no taller than a man!
Yet these little weazened trees
That are dropping on their knees
Down before the bluff north breeze
Are gigantic yew and oak
To the island's pigmy folk.

They are full of craft and guile, Who inhabit Todlin Isle. Oftentimes, with quaint farewells,

They launch out in scallop-shells, On some mighty voyage bound To the mainland meadow-ground. If you're like to cross their track, Straight about they veer and tack, Sheltering in those tangled coves Where they hide their treasure-troves: If you land, they quickly flit Into secret cave and pit: So that never yet, I ween, Any of their ilk was seen. But their bond-slaves you may pass, Weaving through the warm, dry grass (Limber "hopper," coal-black grig, Lady-bug, and emmet trig); And their beds you come across, Strewn with tressed green-gray moss; -Pillows made of silk-weed floss ---Coverlids of rose-leaf lawn — Sweet-fern curtains, partly drawn. You may find their banquet-rooms Hung with white azalea blooms. And the dainties left in haste. If you wish, yourself may taste: -Goblets filled with dewberry wine, Purple beach-plums, sleek and fine.

Honey that was had in fee
From the solitary bee,
Smilax salads cool and crisp; —
You may taste — but no word lisp,
Else for seven years and a day
You on Todlin Isle must stay.
For of fern-seed you will eat, —
Be unseen, from head to feet, —
Be unheard, howe'er you moan,
Till your captive years are flown,
Drag about a gossamer chain,
Serve the King of Elves, in pain.

Ah, my child, be wise and dumb, When to Todlin Isle you come!

A SKY-VOYAGE



H, would you go a-sailing
Upon the light, light breeze?
Above the town and country,
Above the tallest trees?"

"I'd like to go a-sailing Upon the light, light breeze, But we've no ship nor pilot To take us on the seas."

- "The new moon's boat we 'll borrow Made all of mother-o'-pearl,
 A rosy cloud from sunset
 For canvas we 'll unfurl.
- "Then all the tearful dew-elves, Returning to the sky With countless diamond pitchers The sun has emptied dry,
- "And all the lovely flower-folk
 Whose race is run below,
 Will join us in our voyage
 As on and on we go!
- "No trouble shall o'ertake us, No dreary sight nor sound; The bobolink may greet us, Singing a morning round.
- "A star shall be our pilot
 Across the sea of light,
 And some enchanted island
 Shall be our port at night."

A WILD HORSE OF THE SEA

RING me a steed with a tossing mane,

Trip him with lasso on Neptune's green plain;

Bring him, so cumbered and chafing, to me;

I will break him and ride him out over the sea!

His headstall shall be of clear amber and pearl,

With plumes and with ribbons of foam on the curl;

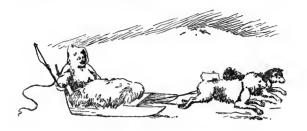
Let the swimmer beware of his lifted hoof, And the skiff of the fisher keep far aloof!

Yet the mermaids shall lead him with garlands of dulse,

And bait him with cresses and blossoming pulse;

And the little sea-children may play their mad pranks,

All astride of his neck and his glistening flanks!



A LABRADOR TEAM



PON the world's rough icy edge See Hans is seated in his sledge, In furs all muffled to his eyes! He takes his whip in hand, and cries,

"Nannook! Nannook!" and with a bound The frisky dog-team clears the ground. Proud is the leader, and the rest, Each, in his own place, does his best; Wolf, Lightfoot, Terror, Search, or Speed, Perhaps, to-morrow morn, will lead! For here in dog-land 't is the rule (Just as for children in their school), If any proves a rogue or dunce, Down to the foot he goes at once! And this is why when young Hans shook

His whip, and cried, "Nannook! Nannook!"
Poor Mischief, who in pride had led
Till yesterday, now hung his head;
And, bowed with shame, brought up the rear,
In his brown eye a big bright tear!
"Pull well, pull strong!" cries Hans, "so, so!
To-morrow to the head you'll go—
Nannook!— and you shall be, once more,
The proudest dog in Labrador!"

ROBIN HOOD AND HIS VETERANS

DREAMED I was in Sherwood
Amid a wild, green glen;
And there I met true Robin
And all his merry men.
True Robin waved me welcome,

True Robin waved me welcome, And each man said, "Good-den."

They sat me down at table
Between bold Little John
And stalwart, brave Will Scarlet:
And every mother's son
A leathern belt and doublet
Of Lincoln green had on.

The supper now was ended;
Quoth I, "My heart 't would cheer,
If I could see ye wrestle,
Or flush the fallow-deer."
Quoth Robin, sighing deeply,
"Oh, that was yester year!"

But loud laughed Tuck, the Friar, (The table shook thereat);
"Fair sir, in 1890
We've done with all of that;
Dear Will hath rheumatism,
And Little John's ower fat!"

AN INTERVIEW WITH CAPTAIN KIDD

SCENE: THE PIRATE'S ISLAND

YSTERY, mystery, is the rune Chanted here both night and noon,

While around this jutting steep The white breakers pry and peep;

And, defeated in their quest, Sink upon the ocean's breast. Here some gale is ever shrill,
Though the four winds all are still;
And a wilder note is heard
From the sea's storm-weathered bird,
While the sandlark, frail and slight,
Nods and totters out of sight.
Yonder flint-embossèd boulder,
Poised as on a Titan's shoulder,
Seemeth oftentimes to stir
Above the sleeping thunderer.

Mystery, mystery, is the rune
Chanted here both night and noon.

Had I craft of eldern days,
That could lurking spirits raise,
Forth should leap, with lusty cheers,
Some king-ghost of buccaneers.
Not more jet his waving plumes
Than the unshorn clustered glooms,—
Penthouse thatch to eyes whose sheen
Matched his steely falchion keen.
Nor his bearded lip should lack
Recent kiss of warming sack.
Knew I spells of conjurers old—



The ghost of Captain Kidd rises.

"Hold!

At thy hardy wish I come, Let my deep voice strike thee dumb! I do teach the wind to howl. I do give the fisher fowl And the tottering sandlark's brood All their throated drearyhood! I, the genius of this bourn, Hence all gainful searchers spurn. But because thou carest not (Thriftless bard!) for treasure grot, Nor for gold in massy bars, While Heaven's vault is lined with stars. And for a new song would part With the hoard of Inca swart — Know thou, 'neath you poisèd rock In a chest with sovran lock.

There the precious spoils lie hid, Of the world-renowned Kidd! — Angels blonde and dusk doubloons, Moor-wrought fancies, Indian moons, Flagons from the rich Levant, Brand and dagger puissant, Wassail bowl and drinking-horn, Gallant prize from tourney borne, Gemmèd idol, priestly charm, And jeweled band from beauty's arm. These, and more, of nameless worth, Lie in sort of darkling mirth, While from bland Floridian shore Far as frosty Labrador, Still crook-shouldered delvers moil, Getting clods for all their toil! By the soul of goodly wine I have store, by wood and brine -Safe from pillage as the prize Iris guards in clearing skies. At those delvers though I gibe, Yet I more do love their tribe Than the trenchant smiling sage Who from Story's sparkling page Would erase me and my coffers. Be it thine to silence scoffers,

Thine to keep my fame from rust, And the edge of youthful gust From the dulling plague of doubt. That the skeptic thou mayst rout, Lo! this guardian monolith Thus I'll heave aside, and sith Thou art greedless, thou shalt see What this cavern hoards for me. Lock, slide back, and uplift, lid, Show the pelf of Captain Kidd.

"Seest thou, and markest well? Straightway I reverse the spell: Lid, fall to, and, lock, be true, Spring no more for mortal's view."





FIRESIDE MAGIC



HO's in the chimney-seat?

The firelight shadows are dancing—

Dancing, retreating, advancing;

We cannot see very well, To tell Who's in the chimney-seat!

Who's in the chimney-seat?

It may be some crafty enchanter—
The witches that chased Tam o' Shanter—

Robin Goodfellow — Queen Lab — Or Mab — There in the chimney-seat.

Who's in the chimney-seat?

It may be just a small maiden,
Deep-eyed, with brain legend-laden,
Dreaming of olden nights
And sprites—
There in the chimney-seat.



THE KING WHO TRAVELED AT HOME



ANCY a monarch old and wise,
With a sober mouth, and merry
eyes,

And snowy beard that swept his breast;

In robes not of purple but russet dressed.

Fancy him riding through the land, Not in a coach, and four-in-hand; But in the manner which I shall show This wise old monarch was pleased to go.

"T is an age," he cried, "that travels so fast, Many wonderful things unseen are passed;

I would see what the rest of the world has missed,

I will travel henceforward as slow as I list."

So a tortoise he called, of the ancient time,

Whose motions were steady, whose patience sublime;

Broad was his back, and with room to spare

For the monarch's footstool and easy chair.

So mounted, he gathered the reins in his hand,

And rode as he liked through the spacious land.

While his courtiers beside him on either hand

Trudged lazily on, indulgent and bland.

Sometimes by field and sometimes through town,

Rode this merry monarch of old renown;

Sometimes but a furlong he traveled all day,

And beneath a green tree for the night would stay.

He said there were kingdoms as great as his own,

But their laws and their manners were yet unknown;

And these, with patience, he hoped to learn, And, so much the wiser, homeward return.

So he studied the ways of the flocks and herds,

And sharpened his ears to hear the birds, — The King of the crows, and the Commodore gray

Whom the tribes of the wild geese all obey.

In the Wars of the Ants he knew who won; He watched how the silk of the Spider was spun;

And the Queen of the wild bees came to him,

With a honey-tale, from the woodland dim.

Sometimes to a country village he came;
And then he would call some child by name,
And invite him to go for a pleasure-ride,
While he told him such tales that he laughed
till he cried!

And the child as he sat by the old king's knee,

On the tortoise' back, clapped his hands with glee

At the wonderful sights, unseen before, That now appeared at his own cottage door.

Would that we too might travel so, But the fashion went out a long time ago: The king is gone, and the mosses creep Over the tortoise fast asleep!

HOW THE PINES WENT TO SEA

HE mighty pines, they march in file

Adown the mountain, in the wind,

By rocky stairs for many a mile, Their dark locks streaming out behind.

They stay not till they reach the coast,
And there a crafty race they meet;
"Oh whither bound, ye lordly host?
Why have ye left your lofty seat?"

"The sea, the sea! He calls us still,
His footsteps shake the mountain's side;
And we have come, befall what will,
To throw us on his bosom wide."

"Not thus, in shaggy disarray,
Ye trooping pines should throng the
sea;

But hark to us, and with us stay, And for his service fashioned be."

They pluck them by their tresses dark,
They cleave them to the golden core;
They shape the keel, they rig the bark,
They fling the sail, and launch from shore.

The mighty pines, with iron bound,

Now swiftly skim the heaving deep;
But though they float the world around,

A legend of their home they keep.

Hence, often as they skirt that height
On which their sylvan years were passed,
A breezy murmur runs so light
From prow to stem, from deck to mast.

The rudder hums, the bowsprit croons, The seaman hears in fond amaze; He dreams of shade in summer noons, Of cool, leaf-matted, fragrant ways.

THE MIGRATION OF THE SQUIRRELS



S the squirrels swept down from the north,
A questioner stood in their way:
"Why thus go ye forth?
Is it peace, is it war, that takes ye so far?"

"Oh, that is our secret," said they,
"And we will not tell!"

As the squirrels swept on from the north,
Said one to the other, "Disclose
Why 't is we go forth."
Then answered the other, "Heav'n's secret,
my brother!

Not one of our company knows, Heav'n keeps it so well!"

INVITATION TO ECHO

WO of us among the daisies
In the meadow bright and
still,—

You, alone among the mazes
Of the dark trees on the hill;
O sweet Echo,
O fleet Echo.

Can we not o'ertake you, following with a will?

[Ah, Will!]

'T is my name — but much I wonder
That you in your hiding-place,
On the shady hill or under,
Things you never knew can trace!
Declare, mocker,
O rare mocker,
What my sister's name is, else you're in disgrace!

['T is Grace!]

What sweet things do you resemble, — Morning dewdrops, starry gleams,

Flowers that in the light wind tremble, Beckonings of the rippled streams?

> O dear playmate, Come near, playmate;

Are these fancies true, or naught at all but dreams?

[But dreams!]

Then come down and let us see you;
If you cannot come to stay,
Ask the stern old hill to free you
Just for half a holiday.

O glad Echo, —

O sad Echo,

To escape your prison can you find no way?

[No way!]



A SHOOTING STAR

ROM Ariadne's crown
Something came flashing down,
Over the distant town,
Over the river and sleeping farms;

The planets above seemed to wink
As they watched the traveler sink;
And motherly Earth, I think,
May have folded a little lost star in her arms.



THE YOUNG GEOLOGIST



OMES one with searching look, To read the great Stone Book: With youthful brows perplexed, He scans the rugged text.

The knuckled rock he taps, And ancient thunders lapse, With deep imagined thud, On beaches of the flood.

Old summers bud and bloom, And sink into a tomb: He sees them bloom again Upon the hearths of men. Life went with striding pace, He hunts upon its trace: A track — a rib — a tooth — What birds and beasts uncouth!

Youth bends with baffled look, Above the great Stone Book; The title-page is dim, The *Finis* not for him.

THE FIELD OF THOUGHT



HE wind of Thought shall seed thy field

With all that North or Southlands yield,

And sun and dew of Thought shall bring

Thy field to happy harvesting.

And Thought's keen sickle, strange to sloth.

Shall cleanly reap the lusty swath, And Thought's deep garner shall contain Thy winter keep of golden grain; So be, thou deem thy field divine, Thy glebe shall laugh, thy toil shall shine.



THWACK-THE-HOUSE-IN-THE-RIBS



N windless winter nights,
When cloudless are the heights,
And every planet sheen
Drives lances long and keen;
When snow-fleece hangs in the
eaves,

And dead are fireside lights,
And not a track is seen
Save mincing, four-foot thieves'
That lead to granary cribs —
Then hark! hark! hark!
In the deep of the night and the dark,
Comes Thwack-the-House-in-the-Ribs!

Half wakes the sleeper, then Is turned to sleep again,

And dreams outside there stands
A troll with doubled hands,
Who jars from time to time
The dwellings of weak men;
A troll from northmost lands,
From gloomy Jötunheim,
Not blustering like his sibs.
'T is only the frost in the beams!
But the name that I heard in my dreams
Was Thwack-the-House-in-the-Ribs!

WHO FILLS THE STOCKINGS?

OOK where the stockings hang in a row!

Least and greatest, how plump they show!

Let lispers and toddlers still be-

Lapland Kriss on a Christmas eve Lowers himself through the chimney black, Lades each sock from his well-filled sack, Leaps to his sleigh — and his reindeer go Lightly over the frozen snow! "Likely story!" you cry, and you
Laugh with your lips and your eyes of blue.
Look sharply now — and now look again —
Lesson in primer was never more plain:
Long stocking, short stocking, all show the
same

Large letter , which stands for a name!

Love left his monogram written here —

Love fills the stockings, O children dear!

YE MERRIE CHRISTMAS FEAST

M

OW Grace is said, no longer wait With eyes downcast on emptie plate,

But see ye Turkey, fat, supine, On which, good People, ye shall dine!

There lieth he, — a noble bulk,
That soone shall be a shattered hulk.
Carve, Goodman, carve, with speed and
skill —

Ye Guests, spare not, but ete your fill!

But who is this, that this way comes?
Sir Bagge-Pudding, with wealth of plums:
Ha! smell ye not ye savorie fumes?
Ye Orient on this table blooms.
Ye Tropics here their Dainties spill —
Ye Guests, spare not, but ete your fill!

And now come Junkets, Jumbles, Tartes, And, after these, ye mince-meat Pie, And monumental Cake, piled high, Made by ye cunning Queene of Hearts, Who all surveys with beaming eye. Quoth she: "Pray tarrie, tarrie still; Ye Guests, spare not, but ete your fill!"

Ye Feast is done, ye Day is gone,
And Sleepe his curtains dark has drawn;
Therethrough peepes many a fearful thing:
Ye Turkey and ye Bagge-Pudding
On legges goe strutting up and downe;
Ye Mince-Pie weares a deadly frowne;
Ye Cakes and Jumbles lead a dance;
Ye Tartes and Junkets madly prance.
Because, O Guests, ye ate your fill,
These sprites have now their evil will!



THE BURIED CHIMES OF CHRISTMAS



LEGEND I've read of a buried town,
Under the wild hills folded down,
Hidden alike the cot and hall,
Hidden the spire of the minster tall:

Yet, oft as the morn of Christmas breaks, From the sunken belfry music wakes.

Through the snowy dells
It ebbs or swells —
This voice of the buried Christmas bells.

Is the legend true? Oh, question not, But seek its proof in the human lot:

Deep in the heart—as each heart doth know—

Is a buried village, called Long Ago; And never the Christmastide rolls round But chimes peal forth from underground.

Ye chimes so dear, Ring clear, bring near The Christmas joys of each vanished year!

Now there's a stir of life below In this secret village of Long Ago: Here laughter of children, and hastening feet.

There silver locks in the ingle-seat,
And youth and maiden, and — wondrous show!—

Ourselves as we moved in the Long Ago. Chime, sweetly chime,

Ye bells of the prime;

Bring us the buried Christmas time!



THE NEW YEAR'S CRADLE

HE New Year's cradle is the crescent moon,

His cradle-song an old vesperean rune,

By shrill winds sung in Heaven; as he rocks

The little stars shake out their sparkling locks,

And smiling down the softened air, They seem to say, "all's well and fair!"



HONEYTROPE

HE bee from the hive, and the lone wild bee,

And the bee from the cave of the blasted tree,

And the leaf-winged moth, and the butterfly

Whose wings are flecked with the blue of the sky,

I met all going one way together: -

"What taketh you forth in the bright spring weather,

And what will you earn for your morning's labor?"

"Honeytrope, neighbor, — Honeytrope — there on the slope!" I laughed them to scorn, for I thought that I knew

No flower with this name on earth ever grew; But they all hurried on in spite of me,— The butterfly, moth, and notable bee;

And I followed, and came to a hillside sunny. 'T was swimming in purple, 't was dripping with honey;

And, humming, they fell to their morning labor, —

"Honeytrope, neighbor, — Honeytrope — otherwise, Hope!"

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